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# GRANNY

A Tale of Old Christmas

By  
"CUSHAG"



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A TALE OF OLD CHRISTMAS

BY

“CUSHAG.”

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# GRANNY.

A TALE OF OLD CHRISTMAS.

**I** THINK I am seein' her yet, an' hearin' the  
purr of the wheel,  
An' a power of silence on her—but always  
doin' a deal.  
Whatever was in to be done, it's done it mus' be  
at herself,  
For active she was surprisin' an' not to be laid on  
the shelf.

Nor no such great age at her neither, an' all  
her intellecks bright,  
But takin' a wakeness at times since some-  
thing come on her that night;  
The childher was used to her ways an' Daa  
would be houlin' his han',  
An' whatever was on in the house, for a while  
mus' come to a stan'.

For the wheel would be stoppin' sudden, an' a  
    brightness over her eyes,  
As if there was light from Heaven come into  
    them urrov the skies,  
For a while with her two han's folded, she seemed  
    to be takin' a prayer,  
But never a word could she speak of what she  
    was seein' there.

Then the wheel would take on again an' be-  
    ginning the sof' an' low,  
You'd hardly be hearin' it first but studdy the  
    tune would grow,  
Till you'd think there was wans in singin' that  
    was larnt at the choirs above  
An' your heart would be goin' a liftin' with  
    thoughts of peace an' love.

But now an' again she could speak—perhaps in  
    the mids' of the night  
The tongue goin' a loosin' at her, an' tell of the  
    silver light,  
“No need” she would say, “for the cannle, but  
    come you here an' sit,”  
“An' I will be tellin' the story as I remember  
    it.”

In them days the people was thinkin' a dale of  
the Christmas time,  
An' goin' to spin or that would be took for a  
sort of a crime.  
I don't know are they godlier now—may be  
they're not as good,  
For all the talk they have got that's hard to be  
understood."

So then on the Eve of St. Thomas, (Black Thomas  
they're callin' him to,  
The way he went back on the Masther—but I  
need'nt be tellin' you).  
But still an' for all from that till Christmas was  
past an' gone  
The people was all to take holly, an' never no  
work to be done.

An' I needn't be tellin' you that's eddicated so  
high,  
The change that was made in the days by let-  
ting a handful slip by.  
A quare thing too to be doin', but them that  
was in had the powers,  
An' its them that will have to answer for  
meddlin' with days an' hours.

I was askin' Pazon to see was he thinkin' them  
wans to blame,  
With the quare bad years they were havin' an'  
rumours of wars that came.  
But, "Never you mind," he was sayin', "if others  
is doin' crimes,  
An' ill wans is raggin' an' teerin'—the times is  
God's own times."

"An' never you fear" he was sayin', "the rain-  
bow is showin' still,  
The seasons is all in their places, an' good  
comin' out of the ill.  
There's peace in the worl' above where we  
hope to meet one day;  
An' spring-time an' harvest is comin' whatever  
the almanacs say."

You'll think I was makin' free, but aw, he's  
the chreestey-coar!  
Wan of the rael oul' standards! The like isn't  
in no more.  
An' always givin' a snog, whether lapped from  
the couth in the brough'm  
Or dhrivin' the gray in the gig, sittin' up like  
a musherom.



Well that's the way it is, but when it was first  
begun,  
It was awkward thremenjus at farms, an' the  
harves' barely done;  
An' the lil dark days themselves that was used  
to be comin' first,  
Goin' a leavin' all at the Saints, an' Christmas  
in with a burst.

An' I'm thinkin' some of the oul' wans was  
middlin' onaisy too,  
An' keepin' the work put by an' not knowin'  
what to do.  
But Granny was wan of the surt that's terrible  
rank for work,  
An' even the hens in the yard was gettin' no  
leave to shirk.

For goin' from mornin' till night, an' orderin'  
masther an' man,  
Or takin' a toss at her needle, an' could read  
like an African;  
An' over the street with the dawn, an' bakin'  
an' brewin' the jough,  
An' whippin' the chile, an' clappin' the dog,  
an' sthrooghin' the pussy-bogh.

An' then when winter was on, the wheel would  
be goin' like steam,  
An' Granny an' her would be singin' like pussy-  
bogh over the cream.  
Aw deed, to the Sunday itself she was takin' a  
a bit of a spite,  
Though regglar puttin' away by six of a  
Satterday night.

Well, well ! When her man was took she failt  
for a year or more,  
With the farm gone all through others, an'  
want lookin' in at the door.  
The bees was annoyed with her too, an' lef'  
her wan by wan,  
For some dis-cese come on them an' all her  
luck was gone.

Them bees is easy vexed when things is goin'  
wrong,  
An' quick to miss their notice, an' terrible bad  
to long !  
But Granny come to in time, for she would not  
be bet,  
An' middlin' bare she kep' us till all was clear  
of debt.

Then us growin' up so fas' an' findin' places  
roun',  
She might have slacked a bit an' wore her  
Sunday gown;  
But takin' joy of her work as others is doin'  
of play,  
An'—"Lave her alone," said the boys,—“she's  
boun' to have her way.”

Aw well, its like you'll be tired an' me goin' on  
like the thrain!  
But Granny was Granny for all—an' is always  
renewed up again.  
So sit you up to the fire—the nights is growin'  
coul',  
An' see can I keep to the story when once I  
am gettin' houl'.

. . . . .



“ No need” she would say, “ for the cannle,  
but come you here an’ sit.”

Well Christmas was pas' we were thinkin', an'  
New Year come with a roar,  
An' the couth of the winter upon us, with snow  
lyin' up for more.  
Laa Giense was at us too, with dancin' an'  
legads an' all,  
With the young folk lookin' for sweethearts,  
an' the oul' takin' res' by the wall.

An' a fine ball down we were havin', with some  
wans up from the Sous,  
An' the childher rampin' an' rarin', from end to  
end of the house—  
But Granny was goin' a frettin', an' wipin' the  
wheel with her brat,  
An' givin' a twiss surrupshus, an' beatin' her  
foot pit-a-pat.

For longin' she was, the sowl, to be havin' us  
urrov the way,  
That she would get room for her wheel, an'  
tired of their noisin' an' play.  
An' "Christmas is pas'," she was sayin', "an'  
Hark the Harals is sung.  
An' I want to be spinnin' the tred from the  
parcel of flax I brung."

Well the childher was tired at last, an' the mare  
goin' a puttin' to  
For the wans from the Sous to go home, an'  
that was the end of the do.  
An' turnin' back from the gate, with the light  
sthreamin' out on the grass,  
When—"Aw, look at Granny,"—says Daa,  
"she's desperrt surely at las'."

For out in the mids of the flure she was  
spinnin' as if she was dhruv,  
An' only stoppin' a second to be givin' poor  
Peggy a shove.  
An'—"Well, she'll get lave," says Daa—"we'll  
be goin' our ways to bed,  
But I'm sorry for Peggy for all, for her eyes  
is so heavy as lead."

. . . . .

THE morning is very solemn with the darkness  
coverin' roun'

An' the trees goin' wailin' mournful as they're  
scutchin' up an' down.

An' the little sleepy stars that's watchin' while  
you res

Is winkin' at the candle-stick you've set upon the  
press.

An' all the burden of the day is on your weary  
mind

As down the stairs you stumble, not knowin'  
what you'll find.

But with the kettle puttin' on an' firelight all  
aglow,

The dear me heart how cheerful then, the worl'  
is comin' to.

An' then among the bushes out you'll hear a  
little cheep,

Some little feathered falla like that's wakin'  
from his sleep.

An' sidin' in the house an' all, when next you  
take a sight

The farm an' fields is sittin' theer an' every-  
thing is right.

We're goin' a risin' early in the summer weather  
too  
With limbs that's tired aching with the work  
that's got to do.  
But summer dark is not no dark, an' jus' a  
curtain drawn  
For shadin' weary eyes a bit, an' liftin' with  
the dawn.

I never had no need for all to let myself be  
wore,  
For Daa was thoughtful shockin', an' always  
on before;  
An' him it was i'stead of me that stumbled  
down the stairs  
An' falled, as deed he mostly did, among the  
stools an' chairs.

"Tut, tut," I heard him say—an' then, the  
splutter of a match,  
An' with the cannle in his han' I heard the  
parlour latch  
Goin' lif', lif', liftin' very sof' as he looked in  
to see  
Was Granny sleepin' peaceful still or shoutin'  
for her tea.



D'you min' these times you're thinkin' like that  
    somethin's goin' wrong,  
Some little soun' you're hearin' p'raps, then  
    silence over long;  
An' all your heart is jumpin' while your limbs  
    are seemin' boun',  
While everything that's in the house is goin'  
    roun' an' roun'.

There's many a time that I would wait to hear  
    if all was well,  
For some of these that seem so smart is awful  
    easy fell.  
An' I often listened keerful until I heard them  
    spake,  
Or else the door a pullin' to if she was not  
    awake.

So when Daa gave a little call, I felt a sudden  
    fear,  
An' hardly dared to look aroun', an' fainted  
    very near.  
For deed an' all our Granny lay as if she had  
    been dead  
Excep' her han's went to and fro like drawin'  
    on the thread.

I touched her han', I smoothed her hair, that  
was so white an' sof',  
The very cap was on her still, an' not a stitch  
took off.  
Her blue, blue eyes were lookin' out as bright  
as polished steel,  
An' all the while her han's went on as if to  
guide the wheel.

The day went by, the weeks went by, an' winter  
near was gone,  
An' still she lay, an' still she watched, an' still  
her hans' went on.  
The Doctor come, an' Pazon come, an' "Give  
her time" they said,  
An' sure through time she eased at last an'  
slep' upon her bed.

So then she brightened middlin' quick an' when  
the Summer came  
Was goin', goin' like herself an' 'workin' jus'  
the same;  
An' first an' last upon the flure, an' spinnin'  
at the wheel,  
But that strange silence on her still of what  
had done the jeel.

An' then one night she called an' said:—"Now  
come you here an' sit  
That I can tell the story while I remember  
it."

An' me an' Daa we humoured her an' 'sat be-  
side her theer

Although the night was wearin' fast an' morning  
very near.

. . . . .

"Well, yondhar time," that's what she said,  
"When I was lef' alone,

I heard poor Peggy sighin' in with many a  
weary moan.

An' still I kep' her at her wheel, I kep' her  
from her bed,

Till sleep come on her suddenly, an' down she  
laid her head;

So then I had the house alone, an' still the  
wheel went roun',

Till bit by bit the fire fell in, an' shaddas comed  
aroun'.

An' something scraped behin' the wall, an' seem-  
ed to lif' a han'  
An' touch me sof', an' frightened though, yet  
still for all I span.  
Then through the dark a snow white bird came  
flying from the hill,  
An' settled on the window ledge like resting  
on the sill.  
(The bird they call the 'Spyrrid' to, straight like  
the Holy Dove  
You're seein' on the Churches up with wings  
stretched out above),  
She watched me through the window an' I  
looked at her again;  
But still I sent the wheel aroun' an' worked  
with might an' main;  
An' then, a little creepy light seemed flitterin'  
on the wall,  
It came an' went, an' puzzled too, I sat an' span  
for all.  
It came an' went, an' came again, an' like a  
silver dew  
It glistened on the quiggal then, but still the  
tred I drew.  
But now the light it frightened me, an' I was  
all alone,  
An' on the settle Peggy slep' with many a weary  
groan.

Then fear began to come on me that I was doin'  
sin,  
For sure it mus' be Christmas now this Light  
was bringin' in.  
An' what if Coorts an' Almanacs have took an'  
changed the day,  
The Light that led the Shepherds on was knowin'  
more than they.  
The wheel itself was silver now an' all in rays  
of light,  
An' whiter than the flakes of snow the flax was  
shinin' bright.  
But Peggy's wheel was navar touched, good  
servant-lass was she,  
That only done what she was bid an' navar  
answered me.

I feared almost to lif' a han' to touch her where  
she lay,  
But had her woke at las' for all to see what  
she would say.  
She looked at me an' at the wheel but she was  
seein' nought,  
An' then I knew that me it was the warning  
message sought.

My han's fell idle in my lap, I tried to take a  
prayer,  
The Light was growin' whiter yet, more bright  
than I could bear.  
An' troubled sore, an' thremblin' all with coul'  
an' fear an' dread  
I crep', an' crep', away from theer, an' laid me  
on my bed."

. . . . .

So that was Granny's story, toul while she could  
spake of it,  
An' many a time again at night she'd call us  
for a bit.  
An' say "I'm spakin' now"—"I'm tellin' ye,"  
she'd say,  
"That so you'll know Oul' Chrissamus is real  
Christmas Day."

An' when the autumn brought its storms, an'  
sea-birds flew aroun'  
She used to watch for yondhar wan to light  
upon the groun'.  
She knew the bird that watched that night would  
come for her again,  
An' still she sent the wheel aroun' an' worked  
with might an' main.



“ My han’s fell fiddle in my lap,  
I tried to take a Prayer.”

But mostly she was silent as she sat before the  
wheel,  
An' often dhramed a bit at times—but always  
doin' a deal.  
An' then the wheel would sudden stop an' her  
two han's would lie,  
An' light that came from far away come on her  
from the sky.

The winter foun' her failin' though, yet still  
when at her bes'.  
The wheel was goin' whistlin' roun',—but longer  
takin' res.  
An' oftener in the everin' her han's was lyin'  
quite.  
An' watchin', so the childher said, for yondhar  
bird to light.

An' when Old Christmas came again, upon the  
very day,  
Her blue, blue eyes were fadin' fas' like skies  
at everin' gray.  
Then through the dark a Spyrrid came an'  
settled here till morn,  
An' well we knew our Granny's soul would go  
with her at dawn.



An' so it was—when mornin' broke, an' birds  
began to cheep,  
An' farm an' fields shone clear again like waking  
from their sleep.  
The Spyrrid spread her wings an' flew to meet  
the rising day,  
An' Granny took her res at last, an' peaceful  
passed away.







